

Abstract 146

TITLE: Economic Evaluation of Safer Choices: A School-based HIV, STD and Pregnancy Prevention Program

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OBJECTIVES: This study evaluated the cost-effectiveness and cost-benefit of Safer Choices, a well-evaluated, school-based HIV/STD, and unintended pregnancy prevention intervention for high school students.

METHODS: A societal perspective was used in this study, and cost-effectiveness and cost-benefit were derived through four steps. First, we estimated program costs. Second, we adapted the Bernoulli model to translate increases in condom use into cases of HIV/STD averted, and we developed a pregnancy model to translate increases in contraceptive use into cases of pregnancy averted. Third, we translated cases of adverse health outcomes averted into costs averted. Fourth, we calculated the net benefit of the program. A multi-variable sensitivity analysis was performed to determine the robustness of the base case results.

RESULTS: Under base case assumptions, at a program cost of \$101,665, Safer Choices achieved a 15% increase in condom use and 11% increase in contraceptive use within one year. 24.37 cases of chlamydia, 2.77 cases of gonorrhea, 0.17 cases of primary and secondary syphilis, 0.12 cases of HIV, 7.92 cases of PID, and 22 pregnancies were prevented. For every dollar invested in the program, about \$2.93 societal cost was saved. Results remain cost-saving under a wide range of model parameters and medical cost estimates.

CONCLUSIONS: The Safer Choices program is cost-effective and cost-saving under most scenarios. School-based prevention programs of this type warrant careful consideration by policy makers and program planners. Program cost data should be routinely collected in evaluations of adolescent prevention programs.

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